(b) whether the Government have formulated any scheme for the insurance cover and welfare of the coal workers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) Total production of raw coal in coal mines of Coal India Limited (CIL) in Madhya Pradesh during 1996-97 (upto January, 1997) was 66.442 million tonnes (provisional).

(b) and (c) Government had already formulated an Insurance Scheme viz. Coal Mines Deposits Linked Insurance Scheme, 1976. In addition to this, it has been decided to introduce a retirement-cum-family pension scheme in place of the existing Coal Mines Family Pension Scheme, 1971 for the coal workers.

As regards welfare of coal workers, several welfare measures have been taken by the coal companies for housing, education, water supply, community development, medical facilities etc. Annual allocation of fund is made by the Coal India Limited (CIL) to its subsidiary companies for educational grants and welfare measures.

Smuggling of Sandalwood

1138. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether smuggling of Sandalwood is still going on in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to prevent the smuggling of Sandalwood?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Textile Exports

1139. SHRI K.S. RAYADU : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the overall growth in textile items export during 1996-97 so far, especially in cotton yarn and woollen clothes; and

(b) the action proposed to improve quality in fabric production and restructuring technology especially for garment sector?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) According to provisional figures available with the Ministry of Textiles, in dollar terms, the overall growth in the exports of textile items during 1996-97 (upto December 1997) was approximately 10.5%. The growth in respect of cotton yarn and woollen clothes exports during this period was around 48.3% and 22% respectively.

(b) The Government have already been taking a number of measures for technological and quality upgradation in the fabric and garment sectors such as strengthening of laboratory testing infrastructure; publicity campaigns for propogating quality consciousness among exporters; reduction in import duty on weaving, processing and garment making machinery items; development of human resource through institutions like the National Institute of Fashion Technology and the Apparel Training and Design Centres; special arrangement for duty free import of raw material for export production etc.

[Translation]

Investment in Public Sector Undertakings

1140. SHRI RAJKESHAR SINGH :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have a proposal which emphasises for the adoption of such a transparent and acceptable system of investment in Public Sector Undertakings which safeguards the interests of investors as well as Public Sector Undertakings;

(b) if so, the salient features of the said proposal;

(c) the time by which final decision is likely to be taken in this regard; and

(d) the date from which the said proposal is proposed to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (d) No Sir. While it is expected and efforts made by the concerned authorities to ensure that the system for investment in the capital market are fair and transparent, the actual investment decisions are guided by the perception of the investors regarding the performance and prospects of the enterprise, including in the public sector. Government do not interfere in such matters.

[Translation]

Coal Handling Plants

1141. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) the total expenditure incurred by different subsidiaries of Coal India Limited on coal handling plants during the last three years;

(b) whether the Government have reviewed the performances of coal handling plants; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?